

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin

Department of Workforce Development

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-7552
Fax: (608) 266-1784
<http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/>
e-mail: dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Contact: Rose Lynch, DWD Director of Communications, 608-266-6753

Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Receives \$70,000 “GROW” Grant

Money Will Support Area Workforce Development and Economic Growth

La Crosse – Today, Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman announced the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board will receive a \$70,000 Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) grant towards workforce development and economic growth.

“Governor Doyle’s *Grow Wisconsin* plan has been a catalyst for regional workforce and economic development, and I applaud the hard work of the Board and their partners. They are working to bridge geographic boundaries and develop strong relationships with regional economic, government, education, business and labor leaders,” said Secretary Gassman.

GROW funding will allow the Board to work closely with the 7 Rivers Region Workforce Development Partnership to address shortages of skilled labor in equipment, machinery and metal manufacturing. In consultation with regional employers, the funds will be used to underwrite the development of demand-driven worker training curricula and certifications in manufacturing. The training initiative will also encourage diversity hiring in the regional manufacturing workforce.

In addition, GROW funds will help identify resources for local businesses seeking services from economic development organizations, and will provide information to make technical college training more readily available to employees of rural manufacturing firms.

The 7 Rivers Region Partnership includes four Workforce Development Boards from western Wisconsin, southeastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa. The Partnership focuses on a multi-county region known as the 7 Rivers Region. The counties include: Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, LaCrosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon in Wisconsin; Houston, Wabasha, Winona, Olmsted and Fillmore in Minnesota; and Allamakee, Winneshiek and Clayton in Iowa.

“This 7 Regions partnership project will greatly complement the work of the Governor’s Council on Workforce Investment,” said Secretary Gassman. “As we develop our workforce and increase career opportunities, we also strengthen our local economy and excite current and prospective employers.”

The GROW grants were established as part of Governor Doyle’s *Grow Wisconsin* initiative. The funds are available through the state Council on Workforce Investment and are administered by DWD. In 2005, a total of \$465,000 was granted to seven regions to cover the state. An additional \$500,000 is available in 2006 to build upon the successes of the local collaborations to continue to promote regional workforce and economic approaches throughout Wisconsin.

--end--

Wisconsin.gov